

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350

My dear Mr. Speaker:

There is enclosed a draft of proposed legislation "To amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize transportation at Government expense for dependents, accompanying members of the uniformed services at their posts of duty, who require medical care not locally available."

This proposal is a part of the Department of Defense Legislative Program for the 89th Congress. The Bureau of the Budget advises that, from the standpoint of the Administration's program, there is no objection to the presentation of this proposal for the consideration of the Congress. The Department of the Navy has been designated as the representative of the Department of Defense for this legislation. It is recommended that this proposal be enacted by the Congress.

Purpose of the Legislation

The purpose of the proposed legislation is to authorize transportation at Government expense for dependents, accompanying members of the uniformed services at their posts of duty, who require medical care not locally available.

There are many distant stations throughout the world where so few military personnel are assigned that it is impracticable to provide complete medical facilities. Civilian medical services may be unavailable locally or unacceptable by American standards. If a dependent in such an area requires hospitalization, he must proceed to an adequate medical facility. The Comptroller General has stated that neither the Dependents' Medical Care Act nor the Career Compensation Act of 1949 authorizes transportation of the dependent patient at Government expense (39 Comp. Gen. 495). The Department of Defense has construed the opinion as applying only to the use of commercial transportation and therefore has continued to move dependent patients by Government transportation when such transportation is available. The enclosed draft bill would authorize the transportation of dependent patients, and necessary attendants, at Government expense.

To give a recent example of the inequity suffered by members of the uniformed services at remote stations, the medical condition of the wife of a young naval officer stationed in Eritrea, Africa, required that she be hospitalized. Unaware of the Comptroller General's ruling

on similar situations, proper authorities issued orders for her transportation at Government expense to the 97th General Hospital, Frankfurt, Germany. The young officer was subsequently required to reimburse the Government for the cost of his wife's transportation. To cite another instance, a dependent wife accompanying an enlisted man stationed at the Office of the United States Naval Attache and Naval Attache for Air in Djarkata, Indonesia, was found by competent medical authority to require consultation and hospitalization for probable heart surgery. Air transportation at Government expense to the hospital at Clark Air Base, in the Philippine Islands, was denied her, following the Comptroller-General decision cited above. While these examples occurred outside the United States, similar situations could occur at some remote duty posts within the United States.

The presence of personnel of the uniformed services in remote areas in this country and throughout the world is required and authorized. It is often to the advantage of the Government, as well as of the member, for his family to accompany him. Medical care should be assured these dependents. It is worthy of note that the problem has been solved for officers and employees of the Foreign Service. Had the service members above been employed by the Foreign Service in Eritrea or Indonesia, transportation of their wives and necessary attendants to the hospital would have been paid for by the Government under the authority of section 14(a) of the Foreign Service Act Amendments of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 1157). Military personnel and their families are stationed in remote areas where adequate medical care is not available, as are officers and employees of the Foreign Service. For the same reasons which urged the passage of the above legislation for the Foreign Service, enactment of the enclosed proposal is recommended.

Cost and Budget Data

Although having to pay the transportation costs of a sick dependent can prove catastrophic to a member of a uniformed service stationed at an isolated post of duty, the situation sought to be remedied by this proposal occurs so infrequently that the cost for all the uniformed services is relatively small. The cost is minimized in the enclosed draft bill by requiring that Government transportation facilities be utilized whenever practicable. For the Department of Defense, estimated annual additional costs are as follows:

Department of the Army: \$25,000
Department of the Navy: \$15,000
Department of the Air Force: \$20,000
Total: \$60,000

Sincerely yours,

Honorable John W. McCormack
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

1 Enclosure
Draft Bill